

Rhonda Fuller



Salinas, California 93907

Re: Lisa McMahon

I wanted to write a character reference letter for my friend Lisa McMahon. I have known her for approximately 35 years. We met while working with her Mother during the summer of 1978 at Savawork Enterprises (now Hope Enterprises), a work program for people with serious mental illness and developmental disabilities, in Salinas Calif. She was 16 years old at the time and worked very well with all kinds of people, no matter how serious their problems were or how much they acted out. Some of them were angry and some we knew came from being in serious trouble with the law for crimes like arson. What I liked right away about her was her compassion for everyone. It didn't matter if you were a friend or a stranger or if you were easy to deal with or not. We became friends and even worked at two other jobs in Salinas after that.

The kindness and compassion she shows to people and animals is heartfelt. My husband reminded me of a typical situation from before she married Mark. She was living by herself in an apartment and called me in a panic. She was crying because one of her goldfish had jumped out of its bowl and was on the floor. I told her to just pick it up and put it back in the bowl, but she couldn't because she was afraid of hurting it. I said she was hurting it by not putting it back but she just wouldn't. It wasn't that she was squeamish or afraid of the goldfish. So I went over there, let myself in and found Lisa on the floor sitting in a huge puddle. She had been pouring glasses of water over the fish to keep it alive. I picked it up to put it back in its bowl and she kept saying to be careful, don't hurt it. Needless to say, the fish was fine, but she was a wreck and so was her carpet. I don't know how to describe it but that's just Lisa. She feels just as strongly about people and their needs.

When she isn't overwhelmed by intense stress or emotion, Lisa is the kind of person you can always count on she can juggle dozens of responsibilities and multitask with impressive efficiency. I have personally witnessed her do so throughout our friendship. She often worked more than one job at a time, working in the evenings after her fulltime job during the day and she still managed to spend quality time with Mark and their children. Whatever the demands of the jobs she had, she was an active and involved wife and mother.

Lisa has always displayed a high degree of compassion, integrity, responsibility, and a strong willingness to put others needs ahead of her own, which was shown by often working 2 jobs at one time to help provide for her family, and then continuing to stay active helping the youth bowling league and her church's youth group. Sometimes this is her downfall. She's a not a strong-willed person, so the fact that she doesn't ever say no puts her in situations where she lets herself be taken advantage of. After her parents moved to Arkansas, Lisa often would drop whatever she was doing to drive out there from Salinas.

Also she didn't think anything of going to Stockton to check in on or assist her sister at a moment's notice. Lisa's compassion can be the death of her. Even though she and Mark had two mortgages on Mark's childhood home, she stopped charging rent to the friend's family that was renting the place when the friend's chemo treatments stopped being covered by insurance. She is definitely a person that has strong family values.

Lisa is one of the most dependable, kind and compassionate people I know. I do not know exactly how or what brought her to do what she is being charged with but I do know she has many regrets and a heavy heart because of it.

I am proud to call her my friend now and always.

Sincerely, *Rhonda Fuller*